

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and system which allows a remote monitoring and diagnostic computer or system to communicate using different communication protocols which are stored within a data base. After a communication is received, it is analyzed to determine if there is a protocol identifier. If the protocol identifier exists, a data base is searched to determine the format of the header of the communication. Once the format of the header is determined, the header of the received communication is read to determine the information contained therein. This information is utilized to determine the actual format of the data which follows. If the protocol identifier does not exist, the received communication is examined to determine if it is in a format which matches one of a plurality of previously defined format. Critical fields are defined which must have certain values and if the received communication matches these critical values, the record in a communication protocol data base matching the critical values will be utilized in order to determine the protocol of the data which has been received in the communication. The machine to which the remote monitoring and diagnostic system is connected is a business office device such as a copier, printer, or facsimile machine, a digital camera, or another type of device.